

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. An absorbent article having a longitudinal center line and a lateral centerline, comprising;

(a) a containment assembly having a rear waist region, a crotch region, a front waist region, a pair of longitudinal edges, a body facing surface and a garment facing surface opposite to the body facing surface, the containment assembly comprising a topsheet, a backsheet joined to the topsheet, an absorbent core positioned between the topsheet and the backsheet, and a pair of barrier leg cuffs having a proximal edge and a distal edge and being positioned adjacent to the longitudinal edges of the containment assembly;

10 (b) a pair of rear ear panels extending laterally outwardly from the proximal edges of the barrier leg cuff in the rear waist region;

(c) a pair of front ear panels extending laterally outwardly from the proximal edges of the barrier leg cuff in the front waist region; and

(d) a reinforcement nonwoven joined to at least one of either the rear ear 15 panels or the front ear panels, the reinforcement nonwoven not substantially overlapping the containment assembly.

2. The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven is a part of the garment facing surface of the absorbent article.

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3. The absorbent article of claim 2 wherein the rear ear panels comprise extensions of the barrier leg cuff in the rear waist region.

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4. The article of claim 3 wherein the front ear panels comprise extensions of the barrier leg cuff in the front waist region.

5. The absorbent article of claim 4 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven is joined to both the rear ear panels and the front ear panels.

6. The absorbent article of claim 5 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven further comprises a strip which is joined to the longitudinal edges of the containment assembly in the crotch region.

7. The absorbent article of claim 6 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven and the strip are a continuous piece of material.

8. The absorbent article of claim 7 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven has a proximal edge, the proximal edge of the reinforcement nonwoven being joined to the barrier leg cuff between the backsheet and the barrier leg cuff.

9. The absorbent article of claim 8 wherein the strip has a distal edge that extends more distally outward from the longitudinal centerline than the proximal edge of the barrier leg cuff.

10. The absorbent article of claim 9 wherein both of the barrier leg cuff and the reinforcement nonwoven comprise a hydrophobic nonwoven material.

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